Acting Edition

JAB

by James McDermott

This sample is an excerpt of a Concord Theatricals title.

Samples of Concord Theatricals titles are for perusal and cannot be used for performance or downloaded, printed, and distributed in any way.

This sample may not reflect the version of the play currently in print.

SAMUEL FRENCH

Copyright © 2024 by James McDermott
Cover image by Kevin Nolan
All Rights Reserved

JAB is fully protected under the copyright laws of the British Commonwealth, including Canada, the United States of America, and all other countries of the Copyright Union. All rights, including professional and amateur stage productions, recitation, lecturing, public reading, motion picture, radio broadcasting, television, online/digital production, and the rights of translation into foreign languages are strictly reserved.

ISBN 978-0-573-00047-8

concordtheatricals.co.uk
concordtheatricals.com

FOR AMATEUR PRODUCTION ENQUIRIES

United Kingdom and World
excluding North America
licensing@concordtheatricals.co.uk
020-7054-7298

Each title is subject to availability from Concord Theatricals, depending upon country of performance.

CAUTION: Professional and amateur producers are hereby warned that *JAB* is subject to a licensing fee. The purchase, renting, lending or use of this book does not constitute a licence to perform this title(s), which licence must be obtained from the appropriate agent prior to any performance. Performance of this title(s) without a licence is a violation of copyright law and may subject the producer and/or presenter of such performances to penalties. Both amateurs and professionals considering a production are strongly advised to apply to the appropriate agent before starting rehearsals, advertising, or booking a theatre. A licensing fee must be paid whether the title is presented for charity or gain and whether or not admission is charged.

This work is published by Samuel French, an imprint of Concord Theatricals Ltd.

The Professional Rights in this play are controlled by Independent Talent Group Limited, 40 Whitfield St, London W1T 2RH

No one shall make any changes in this title for the purpose of production. No part of this book may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system, scanned, uploaded, or transmitted in any form, by any means, now known or yet to be invented, including mechanical, electronic, digital, photocopying, recording, videotaping, or otherwise, without the prior

written permission of the publisher. No one shall share this title, or part of this title, to any social media or file hosting websites.

The moral right of James McDermott to be identified as author of this work has been asserted in accordance with Section 77 of the Copyright, Designs and Patents Act 1988.

USE OF COPYRIGHTED MUSIC

A licence issued by Concord Theatricals to perform this play does not include permission to use the incidental music specified in this publication. In the United Kingdom: Where the place of performance is already licensed by the PERFORMING RIGHT SOCIETY (PRS) a return of the music used must be made to them. If the place of performance is not so licensed then application should be made to PRS for Music (www.prsformusic.com). A separate and additional licence from PHONOGRAPHIC PERFORMANCE LTD (www.ppluk.com) may be needed whenever commercial recordings are used. Outside the United Kingdom: Please contact the appropriate music licensing authority in your territory for the rights to any incidental music.

USE OF COPYRIGHTED THIRD-PARTY MATERIALS

Licensees are solely responsible for obtaining formal written permission from copyright owners to use copyrighted third-party materials (e.g., artworks, logos) in the performance of this play and are strongly cautioned to do so. If no such permission is obtained by the licensee, then the licensee must use only original materials that the licensee owns and controls. Licensees are solely responsible and liable for clearances of all third-party copyrighted materials, and shall indemnify the copyright owners of the play(s) and their licensing agent, Concord Theatricals Ltd., against any costs, expenses, losses and liabilities arising from the use of such copyrighted third-party materials by licensees.

IMPORTANT BILLING AND CREDIT REQUIREMENTS

If you have obtained performance rights to this title, please refer to your licensing agreement for important billing and credit requirements.

NOTE

This programme text is based on a rehearsal script, and may differ slightly from the play as performed.

CHARACTERS

ANNE – fifty-eight, NHS worker.

DON – sixty, vintage shop keeper.

SETTING

Anne and Don's house, UK.

TIME

2020–2021

AUTHOR'S NOTES

This play is based on my NHS worker mother and anti-vaxxer father's declining relationship in lockdown. Until their relationship finally soured, my parents seemed to enjoy their constant boozy bickering. They'd often say things they didn't mean to amuse, shock or play with one another. It was familiar and strangely cosy to them. Perhaps this could be reflected in the production.

Jab *is inspired by the events that unfolded in my parents' relationship during the COVID-19 lockdowns.*

This play is dedicated to my Mum and Dad.

One

(To thumping eighties pop, maybe "Sweet Dreams" by the Eurythmics, **ANNE** *and* **DON** *drunk dance together joyously, as if they've just met in a nightclub.)*

(They do this for some time, loving it, loving life, falling in love with each other.)

(Then, as the music gets louder, harder, faster, their dancing becomes more intense, sexualised, animal.)

(They dance like this for too long.)

(Then two armchairs emerge from the darkness and grow clearer, nearer, trapping **ANNE** *and* **DON***, forcing them too close together.)*

(And as the music and lights distort, suddenly it's hard to tell if **ANNE** *and* **DON** *are dancing or fighting.)*

(They move like this for too long.)

(And then they push each other away.)

(And they fall down into their respective armchairs.)

(And instantly the music ends like a shock.)

Two

*(**ANNE** and **DON** in their respective armchairs, each drinking a glass of white wine, watching TV. A bottle of wine by each of their chairs. They enjoy their bickering.)*

ANNE. Can't believe what I'm watching.

DON. I can. Knew this would happen.

ANNE. Work said it could go on for three months…

DON. Bollocks could it.

ANNE. You don't know.

DON. Read it in paper.

ANNE. Hope the boys'll be alright.

DON. What you on about? They'll be fine.

ANNE. Suppose they're young, healthy…

DON. Just a bad cold.

ANNE. It's not.

DON. It is.

ANNE. I work on front line of it.

DON. Front line of it! You're behind a desk.

*(**DON** drinks.)*

ANNE. You'll have to shut shop.

DON. I know…

ANNE. Not that it makes money.

DON. Makes millions.

ANNE. Makes nothing.

DON. My head space that shop…

ANNE. A hobby, not a business. You can only afford to keep it 'cause I keep you.

*(***DON** *drinks.)*

You can get a job.

DON. I can have a rest.

ANNE. Had a rest for twenty-nine years.

DON. Married to you?

ANNE. You will: you'll have to get a job.

DON. I've got a job.

ANNE. Sat in vintage shop? Reading paper? Drinking coffee chatting to Chris next door?

*(***DON** *drinks.)*

Well you can't do that now.

DON. I know…

ANNE. You're non-essential.

DON. I'm what?

ANNE. Non-essential. You're non-essential.

DON. Like a luxury item. I'm a bath bomb.

ANNE. You can get a job at big Tesco.

DON. I can't…

ANNE. Why not?

DON. I'll…be open again in a month.

ANNE. You're not doing nothing for three months.

DON. Not be three months. And I not be doing nothing. Be sowing my seeds.

ANNE. You what?

DON. Doing my garden. And we can do stuff?

ANNE. I've got work to do.

DON. Not all the time.

ANNE. I'm not non-essential. So if I'm working, you're working.

DON. Well I'm not stacking shelves.

ANNE. Think you're too good for it?

DON. Shut up I can't hear this.

ANNE. Everyone else who's non-essential – they'll have to do it.

DON. I'm missing this.

ANNE. Tesco wouldn't want you anyway.

*(***DON** *turns up the TV with the remote.)*

Underqualified.

*(***DON** *turns the volume up on the TV with the remote.)*

No people skills.

*(***DON** *turns the volume louder on the TV with the remote.)*

And what with your back…

DON. Nothing wrong with my back.

ANNE. It's had it.

DON. In mint condition my back.

ANNE. Had it 'cause you're never off it: always snoring on that settee.

DON. Not me who's never off their back…

ANNE. You make me sick when you come out with stuff like that.

*(**DON** sniggers.)*

Degrading. Demeaning. Sexist.

DON. Not sexist. Give over woman. It's a joke.

ANNE. You're the joke.

DON. Here she goes.

ANNE. You're sixty.

DON. So?

ANNE. So stop banging on about sex all the time. Like living with Sid James.

*(**DON** does a bad impression of Sid James's laugh.)*

Who's that meant to be?

DON. You. After a drink.

ANNE. I'll be drinking if I'm stuck in with you.

DON. Not be stuck in.

ANNE. Caged like animals.

DON. We can have two walks a day.

ANNE. Imprisoned with you for three months…

*(**ANNE** drinks. Perhaps they share a smirk, enjoying their age-old boozy banter.)*

DON. Not be three months: told you.

ANNE. Always locked in with you…

DON. You're always out.

ANNE. When? Where?

DON. With your friends.

ANNE. Not my fault you don't have any.

*(**DON** drinks.)*

DON. You go out to do big shop. We go to car boots.

ANNE. To find vintage stock…

DON. There you go then. What more do you want?

ANNE. Go for dinner.

DON. Don't know who's cooked it.

ANNE. Go dancing.

DON. Two left feet.

ANNE. Not with you. With the girls.

DON. They're sixty.

ANNE. Go abroad.

DON. Wouldn't get me on a plane.

ANNE. Or a boat, a train…

DON. Happy at home. Happy with you.

ANNE. Get you up a ladder though: if we're stuck in, you can do the house.

DON. House don't need doing.

ANNE. Living room does. Look at it.

DON. It's fine.

ANNE. Peeling walls. Damp on corner of that roof.

DON. It's fine woman.

ANNE. You're doing it. Only reason I don't divorce you: you can decorate. I want it done.

*(**ANNE** drinks.)*

DON. Natural Calico?

ANNE. What?

DON. Or Natural Hessian?

ANNE. Whatever colour the walls are now…

DON. I don't know. You paid for the paint. You pay for everything. So what colour is this on the Dulux colour chart?

*(***ANNE** *drinks.)*

Dusted Fondant? Buttermilk? White Mist? Magnolia? Goose Down?

(They smirk at each other, enjoying the game.)

ANNE. Goose Down.

DON. Don't look like Goose Down to me…

ANNE. I said it's Goose Down.

DON. It's Magnolia.

ANNE. Well I want it painting Goose Down.

DON. Good job. 'Cause that's what it is. Not that we can get paint: shops are shut.

*(***DON** *drinks and burps slightly.)*

ANNE. Least I won't have to see you all the time. I'll be too busy working from home.

DON. I can't make noise doing the house then. Not with my back.

*(***DON** *drinks.)*

*(***ANNE** *drinks.)*

Three hundred and thirty-five…

*(***ANNE** *stares at* **DON** *who stares out at the TV.)*

(They drink.)

Three

*(**ANNE** and **DON** sit in their armchairs in front of the TV.)*

*(**ANNE** does work emails on her phone.)*

*(**DON** watches TV.)*

(They drink their white wine.)

*(**DON** belches.)*

*(**ANNE** glares at **DON** who stares at the TV.)*

(Time passes.)

(They drink their white wine.)

*(**ANNE** farts.)*

*(**DON** looks to **ANNE** who stares at her phone.)*

(Time passes.)

Four

*(**ANNE** and **DON** sit in their armchairs watching TV.)*

ANNE. *The Durrells.*

DON. *Emmerdale.*

ANNE. You had *Emmerdale* last night.

DON. Having it tonight.

ANNE. Every night for a week.

DON. It's tradition.

ANNE. It's torture. Put *The Durrells* on.

DON. Not watching that shit.

ANNE. But I have to watch this shit?

DON. You only watch 'Durrells' for her clothes.

ANNE. They're vintage.

DON. Kelly Whats It.

ANNE. Keeley. Keeley Hawes. Pass me the box.

DON. Shut up it's on.

ANNE. Gimme the box.

DON. You're not changing it.

ANNE. Give me the bastard box.

DON. You're not. Fucking. Changing it.

ANNE. I pay the licence fee. Gimme the twatting cunting box.

*(**DON** picks up the remote but won't hand it to **ANNE**.)*

*(**ANNE** reaches for it but **DON** moves it away from her grasp.)*

*(**ANNE** grabs the TV remote from him and changes the channel to* The Durrells.*)*

(They watch TV.)

*(**DON** doo doo doo doo's a snatch of the* Emmerdale *theme loudly.)*

*(**ANNE** watches her programme.)*

*(**DON** removes a packet of cheese and onion crisps he's been sat on.)*

*(**DON** opens the crisps packet loudly.)*

*(**ANNE** watches her programme.)*

*(**DON** eats the whole bag of crisps slowly and loudly.)*

*(**ANNE** watches her programme.)*

*(**DON** noisily tips the crisps crumbs from the packet into his mouth.)*

*(**ANNE** watches her programme.)*

*(**DON** noisily folds the empty crisps packet into an origami triangle and pockets it.)*

*(**ANNE** watches her programme.)*

*(**DON** removes a second packet of cheese and onion crisps he's been sat on and opens them.)*

Over four hundred dead…

Five

*(**DON** sits in his armchair watching TV.)*

*(**ANNE** enters.)*

ANNE. Boys are alright. Just text 'em.

DON. Say hello.

ANNE. I always do. Gammon's in.

DON. You covered it in pineapple?

ANNE. Yep.

DON. Hate it when you do that.

ANNE. I know.

DON. Least if I catch it, I'll lose my sense of taste…

ANNE. Thought you had already with that shirt…

DON. It's designer.

ANNE. Matalan's not designer. You'll need to watch gammon.

DON. Why will I?

ANNE. 'Cause I'm having a bath.

DON. I'm getting in.

ANNE. Not with me you're not.

DON. Don't wanna get in with you. I meant I'm getting in first.

ANNE. You never have a bath. Why you stink.

DON. Well I want one. So I'm getting in first.

ANNE. I've been at work all day.

DON. Sat talking at a laptop?

ANNE. Keeping you.

DON. I've been weeding.

ANNE. Weeding! I've been on meetings. With CCG.

DON. Weeding taraxacum officinale.

ANNE. Or Clinical Commissioning Group to you.

DON. Commonly known as dandelions.

ANNE. I know Monty Don.

DON. So I'm filthy. So I'm getting in bath first.

ANNE. You can get in after me. Not be long. Watch gammon.

DON. We'll toss for it.

ANNE. What?

*(***DON** *removes a coin from his jeans pocket.)*

DON. Who gets in first.

ANNE. I pay water bill.

DON. Heads or tails?

*(***ANNE** *stares at him.)*

Heads or tails?

ANNE. How've I stood a month of this?

DON. Heads.

*(***DON** *tosses the coin, catches it on his hand, looks at it.)*

(A moment.)

Don't use all hot water. And flick immersion on.

ANNE. Tosser.

*(**ANNE** glares at **DON** who returns to watching TV.)*

DON. Five hundred dead.

ANNE. Five hundred and one soon…

Six

*(**ANNE** sits in her armchair. **DON** stands by the open door, which is unseen offstage.)*

ANNE. Shut that door.

DON. Who are you: Larry Grayson?

ANNE. I'm freezing.

DON. Not long now.

ANNE. Pointless.

DON. It's not.

ANNE. Insulting.

DON. It's grateful. All they're doing for the country. For Bojo.

ANNE. If he's even got it. If they're that grateful, pay us more.

DON. All about money with you.

ANNE. Would be with you if you had to earn it.

DON. Any minute now.

ANNE. You're only joining in to wind me up.

DON. Narcissist.

(Offstage, the distant sound of clapping.)

*(**DON** joins in, clapping loudly.)*

Joining in 'cause I'm grateful. For all you do.

ANNE. Sit down!

*(**DON** claps louder.)*

Sit. Down.

(A moment.)

*(**DON** heads for his armchair...)*

*(Then **DON** reaches behind his armchair and picks up a pan and wooden spoon.)*

*(**ANNE** laughs at his gall.)*

Don't you dare.

(A moment.)

*(Then **DON** starts beating the pan with the wooden spoon, loud as he can.)*

(A moment.)

*(And **ANNE** and **DON** burst out laughing.)*

Seven

*(**ANNE** and **DON** sit in their armchairs. They drink glasses of wine.)*

(An empty wine bottle by each of their chairs.)

*(From her phone, **ANNE** plays "Sweet Dreams" by the Eurythmics.)*

*(**ANNE** drunkenly sings the lyrics loudly.)*

*(**DON** drunkenly bobs his head along to the music.)*

ANNE. Playing when we met this…

DON. Chaser's Nightclub…

ANNE. Skegness…

DON. Skeggy!

ANNE. Skeggy Vegas!

DON. "Hello gorgeous" …

ANNE. "Hello lovely man" …

DON. Our song…

*(**ANNE** reaches for **DON**'s hand.)*

(They hold hands.)

ANNE. These hands…

DON. What about 'em?

ANNE. Held my boys. Held me when Dad died, Mum… our Tina…

(A moment.)

Twenty-nine years…

DON. Get less for murder…

(They laugh.)

*(**ANNE** drunkenly sings the lyrics loudly.)*

*(**DON** drunkenly bobs his head along to the music.)*

*(Then **ANNE** stands and tugs on **DON**'s hand.)*

ANNE. Dance with me.

DON. Give over.

ANNE. Dance with me.

(They look at each other and smirk.)

*(**DON** tries to get up but groans with back pain.)*

*(**ANNE** watches him as **DON** gives up.)*

DON. You're pissed woman.

(The music keeps playing.)

*(**DON** watches **ANNE** dance alone for some time.)*

Over a thousand now…

(A moment.)

Eight

*(**ANNE** and **DON** sit in their armchairs watching TV.)*

DON. Barnard Castle?

ANNE. Did you hear me?

DON. Test his bloody eyesight!

ANNE. Drafting us all in.

DON. Poke his pissing eyes out.

ANNE. Everyone. Everyone who works in NHS.

DON. Lock him up in a twatting castle…

ANNE. They want us to go out, look around abandoned buildings.

*(**DON** watches TV.)*

Old schools, office blocks, care homes: see if they're suitable…

*(**DON** watches TV.)*

So they can re-open 'em, turn 'em into hospitals…

*(**DON** watches TV.)*

Morgues…

*(**DON** watches TV.)*

Don.

DON. You what?

ANNE. I'll have to go out.

DON. Well don't go giving it to me.

*(**ANNE** stares at **DON**.)*

And if you're going out, we need crisps.

(A moment.)

ANNE. Don… I'm scared.

DON. It's your job.

*(**ANNE** glares at **DON** who stares at the TV.)*

Thirty-six thousand…

WAIT, THERE'S MORE!

Please visit our website to buy the full script, apply for a license to perform this show (if it's available), or to explore hundreds of similar titles.

www.concordtheatricals.com

www.concordtheatricals.co.uk

To be the first to know about new books, licensing releases, and anything theater-related, follow us on our social media channels.

@ConcordShows and **@ConcordUKShows** on Facebook, Twitter and Instagram.

concord
theatricals